

CHAPTER 2.9.5.

VARROOSIS OF HONEY BEES

Article 2.9.5.1.

For the purposes of this chapter, varroosis is a disease of the honey bee *Apis mellifera* L. It is caused by the Korea and Japan haplotypes of the mite *Varroa destructor*, the original hosts of which are the Korea and Japan haplotypes of *Apis cerana*. The mite is an ectoparasite of adults and brood of *Apis mellifera* L. Early signs of infection normally go unnoticed, and only when infection is heavy does it become apparent. The infection spreads by direct contact from adult bee to adult bee, and by the movement of infested bees and bee brood. The mite can also act as a vector for viruses of the honey bee.

The number of parasites steadily increases with increasing brood activity and the growth of the bee population, especially late in the season when clinical signs of infestation can first be recognised. The life span of the mite depends on temperature and humidity but, in practice, it can be said to last from some days to a few months.

Standards for diagnostic tests are described in the *Terrestrial Manual*.

Article 2.9.5.2.

The varroosis status of a country or zone/compartiment can only be determined after considering the following criteria:

- 1) a risk assessment has been conducted, identifying all potential factors for varroosis occurrence and their historic perspective;
- 2) varroosis should be notifiable in the whole country or zone/compartiment and all clinical signs suggestive of varroosis should be subjected to field and laboratory investigations;
- 3) an on-going awareness programme should be in place to encourage reporting of all cases suggestive of varroosis;
- 4) the *Veterinary Administration* or other competent authority with responsibility for the health of honey bees should have current knowledge of, and authority over, all domesticated apiaries in the whole country.

Article 2.9.5.3.

Country or zone/compartiment free from varroosis

- 1) Historically free status

A country or zone/compartiment may be considered free from the disease after conducting a risk assessment as referred to in Article 2.9.5.2. but without formally applying a specific surveillance programme (historical freedom) if the country or zone/compartiment complies with the provisions of Article 3.8.1.2.

- 2) Free status as a result of an eradication programme

A country or zone/compartiment which does not meet the conditions of point 1) above may be considered free from varroosis after conducting a risk assessment as referred to in

Article 2.9.5.2. and when:

- a) the *Veterinary Administration* or other competent authority with responsibility for the health of honey bees has current knowledge of, and authority over, all domesticated apiaries existing in the country or zone/compartment;
- b) varroosis is notifiable in the whole country or zone/compartment, and any clinical cases suggestive of varroosis are subjected to field and laboratory investigations;
- c) for the 3 years following the last reported case of varroosis, an annual survey supervised by the *Veterinary Administration*, with negative results, have been carried out on a representative sample of apiaries in the country or zone/compartment to provide a confidence level of at least 95% of detecting varroosis if at least 1% of the apiaries were infected at a within-apiary prevalence rate of at least 5% of the hives; such surveys may be targeted towards areas with a higher likelihood of disease;
- d) to maintain free status, an annual survey supervised by the *Veterinary Administration*, with negative results, is carried out on a representative sample of apiaries in the country or zone/compartment to indicate that there has been no new cases; such surveys may be targeted towards areas with a higher likelihood of disease;
- e) there is no self-sustaining feral population of *A. mellifera*, the Korea and Japan haplotypes of *Apis cerana* or other possible host species in the country or zone/compartment;
- f) the importation of the *commodities* listed in this Chapter into the country or zone/compartment is carried out in conformity with the recommendations of this Chapter.

Article 2.9.5.4.

Regardless of the varroosis status of the *exporting country*, *Veterinary Administrations* should authorise without restriction the import or transit through their territory of the following commodities:

- 1) honey bee semen, honey bee eggs and honey bee venom;
- 2) extracted honey and beeswax (not in the form of honeycomb).

Article 2.9.5.5.

Veterinary Administrations of importing countries should require:

for live queen honey bees, worker bees and drones with or without associated brood combs

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the bees come from a country or zone/compartment officially free from varroosis.

Article 2.9.5.6.

Veterinary Administrations of importing countries should require:

for larvae and pupae of honey bees

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the products:

- 1) were sourced from a free country or zone/compartment; or
- 2) have originated from queens in a *quarantine station* and were inspected and found free of

Varroa destructor.

Article 2.9.5.7.

Veterinary Administrations of importing countries should require:

for used equipment associated with beekeeping

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the equipment:

- 1) comes from a country or zone/compartment free from varroosis; or
- 2) contains no live honey bees or bee brood and has been held away from contact with live honey bees for at least 7 days prior to shipment; or
- 3) has been treated to ensure the destruction of *Varroa destructor*, in conformity with one of the procedures referred to in Appendix XXX (under study).

Article 2.9.5.8.

Veterinary Administrations of importing countries should require:

for honey-bee collected pollen, beeswax (in the form of honeycomb), comb honey and propolis

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the products:

- 1) come from a country or zone/compartment free from varroosis; or
- 2) contain no live honey bees or bee brood and has been held away from contact with live honey bees for at least 7 days prior to shipment; or
- 3) have been treated to ensure the destruction of *Varroa destructor*, in conformity with one of the procedures referred to in Appendix XXX (under study).